

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Remarks at an Event Celebrating the ConnectED Initiative's Champions of Change

November 21, 2013

Well, hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. And thank you, Misa, for the introduction and, more importantly, what you are doing in the classroom every single day, which is making such a big difference. And I want to welcome all of you who are here. This is one of my favorite events we do periodically. It gives me an opportunity to say thanks and recognize people who are making extraordinary contributions in their local communities. And we're learning from you, seeing what works, seeing what has an impact.

We call them Champions of Change: people who have done some innovative work that, hopefully, can be replicated in other parts of the country once they have good models that are having success. And today we are honoring 10 educators who use technology to support one of our country's top priorities, and that's preparing our kids and our workers for the competition that they're going to face in a 21st-century global economy.

In an age when the world's information is just a click away, we've got to bring our schools and our libraries into the 21st century. That's why 5 months ago I launched an initiative that we're calling ConnectED to bring high-speed Internet to 99 percent of American students over the next 5 years. And this is going to be a top priority for me. It's going to take some hard work across my administration, but I'm committed to getting it done.

Because this is not just about wiring schools, it's about changing students' lives. It's about using technology to give students a chance to learn at their own pace, whether they're catching up on a subject or moving ahead to the next level. It's about giving teachers a better data set so they can see exactly what's working and what isn't for particular students. It's about unleashing a new market for educational devices and apps that will create jobs and spur innovation.

And it's about supporting outstanding, innovative educators like our Champions for Change. Because of their work in North Dakota, young people with autism are using educational apps to discover abilities that they didn't even know that they had. In Colorado, preschoolers have now obtained access to a digital discovery center that helps them to get a great education from the earliest age. In Georgia, students at an afterschool technology club are learning skills that are going to help them succeed in college and throughout their careers. And today's Champions of Change are helping to give our students what every parent wants for their child: the chance to go as far as their talents and hard work will take them.

So to all of our Champions for Change, we want to thank you for your extraordinary efforts. As long as I'm President, I'm going to keep working not only to support the great work that educators and librarians are doing across the country, but more fundamentally, to make sure that young people are getting every opportunity that they deserve to thrive and succeed in this modern economy. And I see some young people here, and they look like they're doing pretty good. *[Laughter]* Although, they may be bored by me making too long a speech. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Misa Gonzales, English teacher, Desert View High School in Tucson, AZ.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : ConnectED initiative Champions of Change.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Gonzales, Misa.

Subjects: Communications : Broadband technology; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Technology and innovation, expansion efforts; White House Office : ConnectED Initiative.

DCPD Number: DCPD201300796.